What does a Mountain Bird Network survey look like?

What makes a good mountain to survey?

- A mountain that contains an accessible range of elevations from the base to the summit, typically >1,000 m. In some places mountains may have a narrower range of accessible elevations (please contact us if your site has less than this elevation change!)
- We are most interested in surveys of birds in "natural" habitat; contact us if this is not possible for your site.

How to do a survey?

1. Ensure that you have good identification skills for birds. You should be able to identify nearly all birds in your region by sight and sound. The majority of birds will be detected only by sound.
2. Do a point count survey of birds along the elevational gradient during the local breeding season. Here is what this looks like:
    a. 30 or more point count stations evenly spread along the elevational gradient (usually 50 or more is best). Each location needs to be marked with a GPS point (either from a GPS unit, or a mobile phone app such as *Gaia GPS*)
    b. Point count stations need to be >200 m from one another. This avoids surveying the same individual birds at multiple point count stations.
    c. Visit each point count station at least 2 times.
    d. Visit during times of peak activity (breeding season) on days when weather conditions are appropriate (little wind and no rain). Invariably this will be dawn to ~ mid-morning.
    e. On each visit to a point count station, do a 5-minute point count. The count is a stationary survey, recording all individual birds you detect during this time, in all directions. Record the time you started, how far each individual bird is from you (you will have to practice distance estimation ahead of time; you can do this by pacing 10 m, 25 m, 50 m, etc, until you are reasonably accurate with your estimations), and of course the species.
    f. Counts can be 'back to back' to make it easier to replicate - i.e. a 5-minute point count can be immediately followed by a second 5-minute point count at the same station– just be sure to record start times and all detected birds as you would a completely fresh survey
    g. A full survey can be done over one consistent effort or spread over a short period, depending on your own logistics/requirements
    h. Record all information from each survey in a notebook, or specific datasheets (contact us for a template!), and digitize afterwards

What does the actual data for a "complete bird survey" look like?

1. A README text file with information on survey methods and notes
2. A csv with information on point count station location (see example)
3. A csv with point count data (see example)

Please contact Samuel Jones (sjones432@gatech.edu) to participate